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A  
DISCOURSE  
*Delivered at WARMINSTER, July 3, 1799,*  
BEFORE THE  
SOCIETY  
OF  
UNITARIAN CHRISTIANS,  
ESTABLISHED IN THE  
WEST OF ENGLAND,  
FOR PROMOTING  
*Christian Knowledge and the practice of Virtue,*  
BY THE  
*DISTRIBUTION of BOOKS.*

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By JOHN ROWE.

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1799.



BY JOHN KORT

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## A SERMON.

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ACTS. CHAP. II, VERSE 26.

*And the Disciples were called Christians first  
in Antioch.*

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WHEN we direct our attention to the conduct of those who have persecuted their fellow-creatures, on account of their religious tenets, it is not easy to determine, whether that conduct betrays greater weakness of understanding, or depravity of heart.

Though the object of persecutors has been to suppress opinions, by punishing, or exterminating their espousers, it might clearly be demonstrated, both from the principles of human nature and the experience of mankind, to be an attempt no less futile in itself, than it is inconsistent with the mild spirit of christianity. If error often take the deeper root in proportion as endeavours are used to eradicate it, by any other means than those which only are capable of influencing the *understanding*, viz. argument and persuasion, it would

be, in the highest degree, absurd to suppose, that the *cause of Truth* should eventually suffer by any weapons, which its enemies can form against it; and with whatever success their endeavours may apparently be crowned, their victory is but local, and their triumph but temporary. The more a stream is obstructed, the more widely will the adjacent lands be overflowed, and if the current be diverted from one channel, it will form for itself another.

The truth of these remarks is abundantly confirmed by the history of christianity.

No sooner was the religion which Jesus preached, discovered to be subversive of those hopes his countrymen had so fondly indulged of universal dominion, worldly grandeur, and sensual gratification—no sooner was it found that the Kingdom of the Messiah was not of this world, than its founder became every where treated as an impostor and a blasphemer.

After he had fallen a victim to the rage and cruelty of his enemies, the sword of persecution was unsheathed against his apostles and disciples. But their cause was of God, and therefore vain were the attempts which were made to overthrow it. The means which were made use of to obstruct the progress of christianity, were rendered, in the hands of him, “who maketh the wrath of man to praise him,” the instruments of its more



rapid and general diffusion. The observation, which has often and justly been made, that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church, is remarkably verified by the account which is contained in the chapter, from which I have taken the text. After the martyrdom of Stephen, many of the followers of Christ, who, at that time, abode in Jerusalem; from a principle of self-preservation, which, in this instance, was certainly allowable, and, perhaps, in obedience likewise to the injunction of their master, who had commanded them, that if they were persecuted in one city, they should flee to another, quitted the land of their nativity, and became scattered abroad among the different cities and countries of the heathens. Among other places, to which they resorted, the distant city of Antioch, the capital of Syria, was one. There, animated by an inextinguishable ardour in promoting the glorious cause in which they had embarked and suffered, were their labours employed in advancing the interests of the Gospel. But supposing, conformably to the opinion, which was for some time universally prevalent among their brethren, that the gospel was intended to be preached to none, but those who had descended from the stock of Abraham, the only converts whom they made, were persons of their own nation. Being, afterwards, further instructed on this subject, in consequence of a supernatural appearance, which was

exhibited to the Apostle Peter, by which it was rendered manifest, that the kingdom of Christ was designed to comprehend Gentiles as well as Jews, and persons arriving from other parts, who did not confine their preaching to the latter only, as *they* had done, the number of believers was soon very considerably increased.

Intelligence of this event being transmitted to the Church, which was now again assembled at Jerusalem, they deputed Barnabas to assist in forwarding the work, which had been so successfully begun. Nor was it long before it was found necessary to procure additional assistance, and Barnabas departed, as the history informs us, to Tarsus, to seek for *Saul*, or, which is the name he is now known by, PAUL. Having found him, they returned together to Antioch. There they continued, a year, in the work of the ministry. Nor can it be doubted, but that by the co-operation of two persons so signally qualified for the office which they filled, a considerable proportion of the inhabitants of that city were reclaimed from their ignorance and wickedness, to worship the true God, and to obey the gospel of his Son.

During this time it was, that the event took place, which is related in the text; and the Disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Respecting the origin of the appellation given to the disciples at Antioch, two different opinions

have been entertained, some supposing it to be human, and others divine.

To enter minutely into the arguments and verbal criticisms which have been alleged in support of each side of the question, would be to speak altogether unintelligibly to some, and very little to the edification of any. Before the period here mentioned, the followers of Christ were differently denominated. By their enemies, they were contemptuously called Nazarenes, Galileans, and men of that way or sect. Among themselves, they assumed the title of Brethren, Believers, Saints, and the like.

The most probable opinion seems to be, that it was a title neither appointed by divine authority nor adopted by themselves, but conferred upon them by the Heathens, and particularly by the Romans, who resided in that city.

As it was customary with the Heathens to denominate any particular sect, among themselves, from the Philosopher whose sentiments that sect might have embraced, such as Platonists from Plato, Pythagoreans from Pythagoras, and many other instances there are of the same kind, so, likewise, it was natural to call the Believers, *Christians*, on account of their professing themselves the Disciples of Christ.

This opinion acquires considerable confirmation from a circumstance, otherwise, not easily to be

accounted for, which is, that the title is never used in the following part of this book, unless by *Agrippa*, when he says, "almost thou persuadest me to be a *Christian*," nor by the Apostle Paul, in any of his numerous epistles. It was not long, however, before this appellation was adopted by the Church of Christ universally. It is used once by the Apostle Peter, "If any man suffer as a *Christian*, let him not be ashamed," and perhaps it is alluded to by the Apostle James, when he speaks to the Converts, to whom he is writing, of that *worthy name* by which they were called. Afterwards it was not only adopted, but esteemed a title of distinguished honour: a title, which, many have undergone the loss of property, of liberty, of all that was dear to them in life, and even life itself, rather than disclaim. Many, notwithstanding, in every age, have assumed this appellation, to whom it does not in reality belong; and to many others it has been and continues to be denied, whose pretensions to it are established on the most solid foundation.

Let us then enquire, what the character of a Christian really implies; and be assured, it is an enquiry, in which we are every one of us very deeply concerned. To each of us the answer will afford a lesson of admonition and reproof, or be a source of consolation and joy. If any of us find, that we sustain a character, to which we are

not entitled, a regard to our future and everlasting interests will loudly demand, that we render ourselves deserving of it ; if on the other hand, our consciences and the scriptures give us reason to hope, that our claim to it is well established, let us not be dismayed, though many around us, whether from error, from bigotry, from malice, or whatever else be the cause of their conduct, in so doing, should endeavour to deprive us of our right. They may take from us the *name*, but over the *privileges* which are annexed to it, where it is well deserved, blessed be God, they have no dominion.

What then is a Christian ? If for the solution of this enquiry, we betake ourselves to the decrees of councils, and the creeds of at best fallible, but too often weak, prejudiced, and interested men, very various will be the decisions we shall receive. Having therefore, a sure word of testimony, unto that let us give heed ; we have Christ and his Apostles, let us hear them.

After what has been before observed, it must be manifest, that to be a Believer and a Christian, is precisely the same. By examining, then, what a true Believer is, or, in other words, who is the man, that may be said to have a true belief, or a true *faith*, we shall easily ascertain what it is that constitutes a true Christian. When proselytes were admitted into the Church of Christ from



Judaism or Heathenism, nothing, I apprehend, can be more evident, than that the faith which was required of them, or, in other words, the Truth to which their assent was demanded, previously to their admission, was all that was necessary to constitute a title to the denomination of Christians. What faith, in such cases, *was* required, we need only refer to the eighth chapter of this same book to be informed. When Philip met with the Ethiopian, Treasurer to Candace, and had instructed him in the religion of Jesus, the Ethiopian says, " see here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized ;" or being entered among the followers of him, whose religion he had heard so satisfactorily explained. Philip's reply was, " If thou believest, with all thine heart, thou mayest." The Ethiopian answered and said, "*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*" This was all his *confession*, and this was all that was required, " for they went down both into the water, and Philip baptized him." In unison with this confession, is the language of the New Testament throughout. " We believe and are sure that thou art the *Christ the Son of the living God.*" John 6. 69. Martha saith, " Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the *Christ the Son of God.*" John 11. 27. Jesus said to him, " Dost thou believe on the *Son of God.*" John, 9. 35. Again, in the Epistle of John—1st Epis. 3. 23.—" This is the command-



ment, that we believe in the name of his *Son Jesus Christ.*" "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the *Christ the Son of God.*" 1st Epis. of John, 2, 22. And, finally, that I may not tire you with quotations, the same writer, in the 20th chapter of his gospel, has assured us, that the *end he had in view in writing it*, was to produce the *same faith*. These things are written, that ye may believe, *that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God.*"

In Scripture language, the expression *Son of God*, is to be differently understood, according to the connection in which it is used.

Men, in general, are stiled Sons of God, because he is their Creator, and likewise on account of the parental care and tenderness he exercises over them, as well as for the kind provision he has made for their happiness beyond the grave ; which, in allusion to the provision earthly parents lay up for their children, is figuratively represented as an *inheritance*, and good men are denominated Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ, in his heavenly kingdom. For similar reasons, though these are not the only ones, Christ also is the Son of God. Having derived his being from him, for he calls God, "His Father as well as our Father." John 20, 17. Having been by him supported and sustained, "As the Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father," John, 6, 57. Having received

all the powers he possessed, from him, "Of mine own self, says Christ, I can do nothing," John, 5, 30. And to him is he indebted also for that honour and felicity, with which his fidelity, in the execution of the important commission with which he was entrusted, was rewarded. For, because he was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, therefore it is, the Apostle tells us, "That God hath highly exalted him," &c. Phil. 2, 8 and 9.

In the passages before recited, however, the sense is different. There, the expression is equivalent to Messiah or Christ, that is, the anointed. "Anointed, means one who has received gifts, perfections, and a dignity which he did not possess of himself." To this purpose we read in the book of Acts, "You know how God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power." Chap. 10, v. 38. That *Son of God* is synonymous with Christ or Messiah, is clear, to give but a single instance, from comparing the 41st verse of the 1st Chapter of John, with the 49th. In the first of these passages we read that he (Andrew) first findeth his own Brother Simon, and saith unto him, we have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the *Christ*. Soon after, when Nathaniel was convinced of the same truth, he says, Rabbi, thou art *the Son of God*, thou art the King of Israel.

Now then, we see, that the faith, requisite to constitute a person a Believer, or a Christian, is an assent to this one truth, a truth enveloped in no mystery, (for the design of Revelation was not to create mysteries, but to *explain* them) viz. that Jesus is the *Christ*, the person to whom Moses gave witness, and in whom the predictions of the Prophets are fulfilled ; the person whom God hath appointed to reveal his will to mankind, to bring life and immortality to light, and to guide us in the way to everlasting Salvation. And as this is all that is necessary, so must the necessity of this be evident, for, if, as the Apostle argues, he that cometh to God, or engages in any act of religion, " must believe that God is, and that he is the rewarder of all those who diligently seek him," Heb. 11, 6. without both of which there could be no possible motive to worship and obedience, so, likewise, is the belief of the divine mission of our Saviour, upon which depends the truth of the sublime doctrines and precious promises, contained in the Gospel, essential to our being christians. But here the question may be asked, will this faith, or an assent to the fact, that Jesus " was a Teacher sent from God," entitle a person to the appellation of a true Christian, or, as our Lord himself has expressed it, will it render us " his Disciples indeed ?" It may be answered, that barely to sustain the *name* of a Christian, will certainly be of no avail.

Suppose a man to be convinced ever so thoroughly, that christianity is a revelation from God, and not to *live* conformably to it, that of *itself* will profit him nothing. This, however, is a supposition, which can scarcely be admitted. Many, no doubt, there are, who *call* themselves Christians, and profess to entertain the most confident persuasion of the truth of the Gospel, who, to their shame be it spoken, not only afford room for the enquiry, "what do ye more than others?" but who allow themselves in vices, which, among Christians, as the Apostle speaks, "ought not to be named," and at which, some, who make no pretensions to religion, would blush; in a word, whose conduct would lead a person, that had no opportunity of judging of Christianity, by any other means, to suppose its precepts to be directly the reverse of what, in reality, they are. But such, whatever they may pretend, are not those firm and true Believers, they would wish to be considered, nor, as they probably imagine, they are. Perhaps, they assent to the truth, that Jesus is the Christ, for the same reason, that in different circumstances, they would have *denied* their assent, because it is what they have been accustomed to hear and see professed in the world around them, and, therefore, are still devoid of that heart-felt *conviction*, which an attentive examination of its evidence and excellence is calculated to produce: or, it may be, they

believe *too much*, which is very far from being unusual, and adulterate this truth by the mixture of some spurious opinions, by which the obligations of morality are relaxed, and the powerful motives to live a sober, righteous, and godly life, are counteracted.

Let a man once be convinced of the truth *as it is in Jesus*, let him firmly, and *with all his heart*, believe the Gospel in its *purity*, and he will no longer wonder that the Apostle should speak of Christians being justified, or pardoned by faith, sanctified or made holy by faith, or of their being even saved by faith ; since it will necessarily produce those fruits, which will render us objects of the divine favor now, and of future acceptance.

This doctrine, however, of Salvation by Faith, soon began to be perverted and abused, and much does it continue to be so to the present day. The Apostle James, therefore, saw it necessary to separate in language, what it seems, some had practically separated. As a mere profession of Christianity was, by them, considered as all that was requisite to Salvation, he strongly urges the indispensable necessity of *good works*, and declares, (happy would it be, were his declaration treated less slightly than it is) that “ Faith without *works* is dead being alone.” Jam. 2, 17. To promote *holiness of life*, was the main design and end



for which the Gospel was published to the world, and unless this its object be accomplished in all who embrace it, they may be assured they have received the grace of God, so illustriously displayed by the mission of Jesus Christ, altogether in vain.

From what has been said, we cannot but remark, how destitute of all foundation, and how contrary to the Gospel, is the conduct of those, who exclude from the Church of Christ all, whose sentiments of his Person and Office do not coincide with their own.

Were the enquiry, what is a Christian ? to be made of the majority of the professors of the Gospel, widely different, I am sensible, would be their reply from the answer which I have endeavoured to show the *scriptures themselves* return.

If to acknowledge Jesus to be the Christ, Messiah, or Son of God, be all the faith (speculatively considered) which is necessary to establish a claim to the appellation of a Christian, then what authority can any man, or any body of men, have to deny this title to those, by whom this fundamental principle of Christianity is professed ? This the Unitarian believes, as firmly as the Trinitarian, and it should seem, much more *consistently* ; for how Christ can possibly be the Son of God, and God himself at the same time ; how he that is sent can be one and the same with him who



sends him ; how our Lord could say, that the Father is greater than he, if he were his equal, [See Note I. at the end] or how the Being who is unchangeable, immortal, and eternal, could be born of a woman, one of his own creatures ; be subjected to the infirmities of humanity, and expire on a cross, are difficulties, which, thank God, Christianity does not expose us to the arduous and ineffectual task of endeavouring to surmount.—And yet all this, and much more of the same kind, many will tell us we must believe, or be for ever undone !! But certainly the *Scriptures* speak no such language. So far are they from informing us that the belief of a *Trinity* is necessary to Salvation, that, search the New Testament from beginning to end, and no where is the word, no, nor any word of a like *import*, to be found. Their language is, that “ though there be that be called Gods, (as there are Gods many and Lords many) to us there is but *one* God, the *Father*.” 1 Cor. 8th Chap. 5th and 6th. “ Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is *one* Lord,” Mark, 12, 29, or as the words have been more forcibly translated, Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone. And that the Faith I have been attempting to explain, is all the faith that is necessary to recommend us to the acceptance of God, (if accompanied by a good life,) is positively asserted in a passage which has, in part, been quoted already. “ These things are written, that ye may believe that Jesus

is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing, ye may have *life through his name*. And again, "This is eternal life, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." John, 17, 3. Let us not, then, to whatever denomination of Christians we belong, forget that others, though they may, in some respects, differ from ourselves, are not, on that account, while they believe that *Jesus is the Christ the Son of God*, the less the disciples of the same master, and heirs of the same heavenly inheritance.

Error, in opinion, then only becomes criminal, when we employ not to the best advantage, the means we possess of knowing better, or, when, from indifference, or worldly considerations, we embrace or retain opinions which we know to be erroneous. If, after using the best endeavours we can, to come to the knowledge of the truth, we should still be found erring, God will mercifully rank our errors not among our sins, but our imperfections.—Yet, alas ! how many are there, who will censure with much less severity, a deviation from the path of virtue, than, what they deem an heretical opinion. "I know, says Dr. Tillotson, no such heresy as a wicked life, that man believes the Gospel best, who lives most according to it." If we follow not the rules which Christianity has prescribed, and do not imitate the example of Christ, let us not so fatally deceive

ourselves, as to imagine, we shall, at the great day, be saved for our creed. "Many will say to me (such is the awful warning, which Christ himself has left us) many will say to me at that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out dæmons, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" But if we have been workers of iniquity, neither this, nor any other plea we can allege, will avail us; for unto all such will he say, "Depart from me, I tell you, I know you not." For Christ is the author of eternal salvation, to those only, who obey him." Heb. 5, 9.

To revive what to us appears to be the clear doctrine of Scripture, that "there is one God and one Mediator between God and Man, the *man* Christ Jesus," and to promote the practice of his pure and heavenly precepts, are the objects of the Institution for the support of which, we are now assembled. Considering, as I do, the doctrine of the divine Unity, to be the corner stone of all rational religion, a doctrine, which the records both of the old testament and the new, appear to me to assert, in language the most unambiguous and express, I could not hesitate to become a member of a Society, as soon as the plan of it was made known to me, which has for its object, the dissemination of this important, fundamental truth. And I am fully persuaded, that the more you

apply yourselves diligently and impartially to that most momentous and interesting of all employments, in which the faculties of the human mind can be engaged, the study of the Scriptures; the more firmly will you be established in that leading article of religion, natural and revealed, "that there is one God, and none other but he;" that the Holy Spirit, instead of being a *person* distinct from the Father, is the wisdom, the power, in short, the operations of the divine perfections of the Father himself, [See Note II. at the end] whom Christ acknowledges to be "his Father as well as our Father, his God as well as our God." John, 20, 17.

The more also, you study the Scriptures, with minds unbiassed by prejudice and generally prevailing opinions, the more will you be convinced, that God, the great center of all perfection, is no less good and gracious, independently, than he he is independently powerful and wise, that he is ready to receive sinners to his favor on repentance and amendment of life, and on these terms *alone* and *only*. Nor are the contrary doctrines subjects of mere speculation, they influence the conduct. In the exercises of worship, they transfer from God that glory, which he has declared "he will not give unto another," Isaiah, 42, 8. and, by dividing among three coequal persons, the perfections of Deity, leave to the Father those inexorable attributes only, which, however well adapted

to excite the painful emotions of dismay and terror, cannot render him the object of those complacent, filial affections, which our Lord more than intimates ought to possess and animate our souls, when he lays it down as the first and great commandment, "that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength." Mark, 12, 30.

And, though I would by no means, in this, or indeed any case, without convincing evidence, charge on persons the consequences of the principles they maintain, how naturally soever these consequences may *seem* to result from them, it certainly does appear to me, that those who believe the sufferings of Christ were designed to avert, not mediately but immediately the wrath of God from themselves, that the divine justice was satisfied by the punishment of the innocent *instead* of the guilty, or that Salvation is attached to a man's creed, independently of his conduct, have much fewer and feebler inducements to a moral life, than those have who are convinced of the necessity of working out, by God's assistance, their "own salvation, with fear and trembling," looking for a day, "when God will reward every man according to that which he hath *done*, whether it be good or whether it be evil." These two prevailing tenets the Trinity and Atonement, appear to me to be the foundations on which



most of the other corruptions of Christianity depend, and render it, instead of being what a revelation from God might be expected to be, and as Christ preached it, plain, intelligible, and consistent, an inexplicable system of mystery and perplexity.

Against the *abuses* of Christianity in general, and against these illegitimate doctrines in particular, it is, that the shafts of infidelity have been, and still are, principally directed ; and did they constitute, in reality, any part of the doctrines of Christ, I do not see, how the religion we profess, could long maintain its ground. The scoffs of unbelievers ought not, undoubtedly, to be deemed a sufficient reason for abandoning what they may think fit to deride ; if so, what would become of our faith in what Christ really *has* taught, and we should soon be reduced to the deplorable condition of the Gentiles of old, “strangers to the covenant of promise, without God and without hope in the world.” At the same time, it behoves us to take care that we do not needlessly lay a stumbling block in the way of any. The age, in which we live, is an age of enquiry ; not but that many who boast of the title of enquirers, have little or no pretensions to the name ; among whom, very many of the opponents of religion, may, I verily believe, without any breach of charity, be ranked. They see that what Unitarians class



among the *corruptions* of Christianity, cannot be true, but do they investigate, as it becomes those who lay claim to the appellation of *Philosophers* to do, what Christianity really is, and weigh seriously and impartially the evidence both external and internal, by which it is supported ?

We, notwithstanding, live in an age of enquiry, and it is the *indispensable duty* of every friend of genuine religion, to assist in separating the chaff from the wheat, the doctrines of Christ, from the inventions and perversions of men.

The more religion is disburthened of superstitious ceremonies, human creeds, and spurious opinions, the more credible and incontrovertible will it show itself to be ; the more readily will it be adopted where it is not professed, and among its professors, the more productive will it become of its natural, beneficial effects, " Glory to God, peace on earth, and good will among men." That opinions, which have long been held sacred, and deemed essential to Salvation, should not be pertinaciously maintained, and that the easy modes, by which many hope to obtain Salvation, should be unreluctantly suffered to be supplanted, by the comparatively difficult, but only true mode : " by living soberly, righteously, and piously, and by a patient continuance in well doing," it would betray a great deficiency, indeed, in the knowledge of human nature to expect. Against

every attempt at reformation, opposition, will of course, be raised. It was the case, when the national Church, in this country, became in part reformed from Popery, and the same outcry which was raised against the venerable confessors of that day, men, whose memories we so deservedly revere, is now raised against all those, who endeavour to carry on the salutary work, which was, at that time, as might reasonably be expected, but very imperfectly performed. Were it necessary to cite authorities, to show, that opinions are not the less likely to be true, because they are unpopular, and that of what *is* true, numbers are no test, I might carry your attention back to the days of Christ, and his Apostles. I might remind you, there was a time, when Paul was deemed a babler, Christ himself the agent of Beelzebub, when Christians were but a sect, and that sect every where spoken against. And why should the servants expect to be above their master ? calling ourselves his Disciples, "who came into the world to bear witness to the *truth*," let us, whatever we may forego, whatever we may lose, whatever we may suffer, for the sake of faith and a good conscience, prove ourselves deserving the character we sustain, by following the example he has set before us. "He, saith Christ, that taketh not *his cross* and followeth me, is not worthy of me." And shall we shrink back on account of the comparatively *little* diffi-

culties *we* may have to encounter ! “ Whosoever shall be ashamed or afraid to confess Christ and his words before men, of him also will the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.” “ He that hath an ear let him hear.” Happy those who render themselves the honored instruments in the hand of God, of diffusing the knowledge and enforcing the practice of pure and undefiled religion ! whether you be permitted to see the fruits of your labors or not, “ your work is with the Lord, and your recompence with the Most High.” But as to this world, your labor will not be in vain, your cause is of God and it will prevail. God is working wonderfully in the earth, the prophecies are fulfilling, Antichrist is falling, the reign of pure unadulterated Christianity is approaching. “ Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly !”

Before I conclude, I cannot forbear adding a few words more to those who are fellow-members with me of this Christian Association. We profess to be Promoters of Christian Knowledge, and the practice of Virtue. Let us be careful to render knowledge subservient to practice. If we have knowledge, let us shew it out of a good *conversation* ; by purity of heart and uprightness of life, by exercising candour and forbearance towards all men, by advancing to the utmost of our power, the happiness of all around us, by a due regard to

the ordinances of religion :—" by being fruitful in every good word and work." Whatever we may *profess*, then only are we the friends of Christ, when we do the things which he hath commanded. Let us recommend the doctrines we have embraced, by manifesting their excellence in our lives. As we profess to found all our hopes on a *good life* through the mercy of God, manifested by Christ Jesus ; on this rock let us build, and the gates of death shall not prevail against us. And when the glorious morning of the resurrection shall dawn, we shall awake to a new and better life, where error shall no more becloud our understandings, nor temptations pervert our wills, "where no root of bitterness shall spring up," where all, who faithfully endeavour to learn of Christ, and keep his commandments, where all in every nation, who fear God and work righteousness, shall unite in one harmonious blissful Society, and dwell in unity, love, and happiness, for ever.

## NOTES.

NOTE I. p. 17.—“*How our Lord could say, that the Father is greater than he, if he were his equal,*” &c.—It will be said, that though Christ here asserts, that the Father is greater than he, he asserts in another place, John 10, 30. I and the Father are one. But one what? he does not say one God, but simply that they are one. If the expression be understood to mean, as the context clearly shews it must mean, that they are one by their having in view the same benevolent ends, it gives no countenance to the doctrine, in favour of which, it is so commonly and confidently alleged. But if, because Christ says, I and the Father are one, it is to be inferred that they are one God, then it might be inferred too, did not common sense revolt at the absurdity, which in *this* case must be manifest to every one, and to many it is equally so in *both* cases, that Christ, the Father, and the *Disciples*, were one God likewise. Neither pray I, says our Lord, for these alone; but for them, also, who shall believe on me through thy word, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that *they also may be one in us*; John, 17 20, 21. Now he that planteth (Paul) and he that watereth (Apollos) are *one*. 1 Cor. 3, 8. One, undoubtedly, “in respect of harmony, mutual benevolence, love, and a joint exertion of their powers in the common defence of the Gospel.”

It will be said, also, that when Christ speaks of the Father being greater than he, he means to speak of his *human nature* only. So readily, on all occasions, is this plea resorted to, that it might reasonably be expected, the advocates for the heterogeneous union of two natures in Jesus Christ, would be able to produce passages of Scripture, many and express, in support of this convenient *hypothesis*. If an hypostatic union be supposed to be implied in passages of Scripture, like these “made of the seed of David, *according to the flesh*,” “Whose are the Fathers, of whom concerning *the flesh* Christ came.” &c. This, again, will carry us farther than some are aware, since we read of “Abraham our Father, *as pertaining to the flesh*”; of Israel *after the flesh*; and Paul speaks of his kinsmen *according to the flesh*; not, surely, *according to*



*human nature*, but according to natural descent. Admitting, however, Christ had not only two natures, but, ever so many, when he affirms or denies any thing of *himself*, he unquestionably speaks of his *whole* self. Is it possible, that he, "in whose mouth was no guile," should say, he could not do, and did not know, what he *could do*, and *did know* at the same time !

"I have two organs of sight, two eyes ; now suppose I converse with a man, with one eye shut and the other open ; if being asked whether I saw him, I should dare to say, I saw him not (without limitation) meaning to myself, that I saw him not with the eye that was shut, though I still saw him well enough with the eye that was open, I fear, I should bear the reproach of a liar and deceiver, notwithstanding such a mental reservation, as some would attribute to the Holy Jesus." Emlyn, quoted by Christie, on the divine Unity, p. 104.

"This doctrine of Christ being possessed of two natures, is the fiction of ingenious men, determined at all events, to believe Christ to be a different being from what he really was, and uniformly declared himself to be ; by which, they solve such difficulties of Scripture as they cannot otherwise get over, and endeavour to prove him to be the Most High God, in spite of his own most express and constant declarations to the contrary." Lindsey's Catechist. p. 27.

NOTE II. p. 20.—"*Operations of the Divine Perfections of God himself*"—Christ says, in Mat. 12, 28. "If I, by the *Spirit of God*, cast out Devils (or Dæmons as it is in the original) and in Luke, 11, 20. If I, with the *finger (or power) of God* cast out Dæmons.



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N. B. Those persons marked \* are Members for Life;  
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GENERAL STATE OF THE  
SOCIETY'S ACCOUNTS,  
From July 4, 1798, to July 3, 1799.

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Balance, July 4, 1798.....	£13	14	4
Annual Subscriptions,.....	23	2	0
Admission Fees, .....	3	3	0
Benefaction,.....	10	10	0
Interest,.....	3	0	0
Allowance for Paper.....	1	8	0
Books purchased of the Secretary.....	20	15	9
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	£75	13	1
	<hr/>		

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Disbursed by the Purchase of Books.....	19	16	7
By Printing, Paper, &c.....	27	1	6
By Necessary and Incidental Expences... ..	4	10	10
	<hr/>		
	51	8	11
	<hr/>		

Balance, July 3. 1799. £24 4 2

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WARMINSTER, July 3, 1799.

At a Meeting of Friends to Christian Truth and  
Free Enquiry.

Mr. WILLIAM WANSEY in the Chair.

*It was resolved,*

That a plan of LIBERAL EDUCATION, in order to prepare young persons for the exercise of the Christian Ministry among Protestant Dissenters, or for Commercial and Active Life, by the Rev. Messrs. BRETLAND and KENRICK, of Exeter, having been read by the Rev. JOHN ROWE, the same was approved.

That the Gentlemen present at this Meeting, wish to see such a plan generally adopted in the West of England : and are ready to assist the execution of that part of it, which relates to the Education of Students in Divinity, by their Recommendations and Subscriptions.

That with this view, these Resolutions be printed and dispersed with an Address to the Public, recommending the general Scheme and Contributions, to support, during the course of their Education, young Men, intended for the Ministry.



## TO THE PUBLIC.

That the Christian Religion derives benefit from improvements in knowledge, cannot be doubted, by Protestants who recollect that the Reformation from Popery originated in the revival of learning, and that every approach made since that event, towards a better system of faith, has been the consequence of a more accurate acquaintance with the original languages, of a correction of the text, of the adoption of juster rules for the interpretation of the Scriptures, or of other advances in Science. On this account, the cultivation and diffusion of knowledge has been justly regarded as intimately connected with the purity, and consequently with the moral efficacy and utility of the Christian Revelation. The dissemination of good principles may, doubtless, be much promoted by the distribution of Books; but it must be obvious, that the communication of knowledge is most speedily accomplished by living Instructors, who can do at once for many that, which books do individually and gradually. To provide for the Education of well-informed Teachers of Religion, must, therefore, be considered as highly conducive to the progress of truth, and an important object of christian benevolence. The exertion of this benevolence is proper at all times, and seems to be particularly called for at the present moment; when, without such aid, the Christian Revelation is liable to suffer so much by the efforts of unbelievers to undermine its foundations, on the one hand, and by the

zeal of ignorance and enthusiasm, on the other, to propagate mistaken and injurious representations.

Impressed with these considerations, and influenced by a desire of furnishing this district of the Kingdom with the means of religious information, and to preclude the inconvenience of sending young persons to a great distance for education, we recommend the opening of a SUBSCRIPTION for the purpose of educating at Exeter, sons of such persons as cannot bear the expence of procuring for them Academical Instruction, and yet wish to prepare them for exercising the Ministry among Protestant Dissenters.

Those who are disposed to encourage this design, are requested to send their Names to the Rev. JOHN ROWE, Bristol ; Rev. T. BROADHURST, Bath ; Mr. Wm. WANSEY, Warminster ; Rev. Dr. TOULMIN, Taunton, or Mr. JOHN SHUTE, Exeter.

E N D.

